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McCOMBER'S TRACKS:

OR,

HIS IMPRESSIONS OF

THE HUMAN FOOT:

ITS USE, ABUSE, AND PRESERVATION.

WITH

AN APPEAL

TO FATHERS AND MOTHERS TO SAVE THEIR CHILDREN'S FEET FROM DEFORMITY.

BY JOEL McCOMBER,

INVENTOR AND PATENTEE OF THE "McCOMBER L. & R." AND ALSO OF THE "McCOMBER PATENT GLOVE-FITTING BOOTS AND SHOES."

TENTH EDITION, REVISED.

OFFICE AND STORE:

...AST 10TH STREET, FIVE DOORS WEST OF BROADWAY.

NEW YORK.

1890.

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TENTH EDITION, REVISED.

BOSTON AND CHICAGO:
[illegible]
1887.

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PREFACE TO THE TENTH EDITION.

The tenth edition of "McComber's Tracks" is here presented, revised and improved.

In offering it, I desire to state briefly how differently my business has shaped itself since the date of my patent (November, 1870), from what I had reason to expect.

My Patent Last was the culminating triumph of years of study and investigation. The human foot and its wrongs were subjects of my profound solicitude during many years. When I had attained to the perfect system of foot clothing, and had secured United States' letters patent therefor, I concluded that my fortune was made. I knew that all civilized humanity suffered foot distortions, induced by the want of skill and knowledge on the part of shoemakers. I felt sure that, when my lasts, modeled after the perfect human foot, should be offered them, they would be seized upon with avidity and would shortly be in use by every shoemaker in the land. I considered it to be my duty to provide the lasts, and I never had the smallest thought of entering into the manufacture of boots and shoes. I never entertained a momentary doubt of the ready and rapid introduction of a perfect last all over the country, and thus that the work of supplying perfect lasts for the imperfect feet of the nation would keep me busy for the term of my natural life. That shoemakers would reject them

or seek to argue them out of existence, or adopt them reluctantly, or assume to alter their perfect proportions, I never supposed for a moment. How grievously was I disappointed in all these respects! An early plan of mine was to sell for a small consideration the right to manufacture my patent boots and shoes on my patent lasts. I selected some of the more intelligent shoemakers, explained to them my perfect methods, gave them an opportunity to wear shoes made on my lasts, and, when they were convinced, as they declared, of their excellence, I authorized them to make my patent goods for their customers. The result was disastrous in every case. Not one of those whom I so empowered dealt honestly in the matter. Every one of them proceeded to so alter, change, and disfigure the last as to ruin it altogether. Not one of them proved to possess backbone enough to do his whole duty by his customer, regardless of the customer's whims and fancies. To secure additional trade, they availed themselves of the growing popularity of my lasts among the cultivated class, and continued to distort human feet on the old-time plan. So I was compelled to open a shoe store, and employ workmen and educate them, so as to supply honestly what could not be procured for love or money—perfect boots and shoes.

So, for eight years, I have devoted my attention to the manufacture of my patent boots and shoes and patent lasts, and now have over 5,000 customers scattered over the Continent of North America.

In all these years, and with probably a better custom patronage than any shoemaker living, I have not made one dollar from this part of my business. This is be-

cause I have supplied the best material to be bought, have employed the best workmen, paid them the best wages, and have made only a trifling profit on the boots and shoes supplied. It has taken all my profits, from all sources, to supply lasts for my customers. Indeed, I have often made a pair of lasts for a casual customer, which, with the boots or shoes made thereon, have cost me five dollars more than the price received for the shoes. Almost my only source of revenue has been the lasts which I have made to fit the feet of some of my customers, and which they have bought and paid me for. The lasts have all been made by me, and upon them I have worked by day and by night. Many of the lasts made by me and sold to my customers, though left in my charge for use as required, could not be bought for ten times their cost, because their owners find the boots and shoes which I make upon them to be absolutely perfect, and they fear that I could not make other lasts as satisfactory—a fear, by the way, which is not well founded, since my system admits of no errors, even though repeated a thousand times.

I have spoken of one disappointment and mistake; let me now own up to another very serious one. When I had perfected my last, I supposed that the great majority of feet were so nearly natural in form, so slightly distorted, that a regular system could be followed in the manufacture of lasts, so that from all widths and sizes of a thousand pairs at most, a nation could be fitted with perfect boots and shoes. I soon discovered that not one adult foot in one thousand exists without very serious distortion, and that the distortions existing are various in kind and degree, and therefore cannot be

cured except by treatment which shall be special to the individual case. I found that one thousand pairs of lasts would be enough for one thousand persons, and for no more and no less. Even this estimate would not suffice for growing children, since with growth new lasts would be annually needed to insure perfect feet.

To supply five thousand customers with perfect boots and shoes I must have five thousand pairs of lasts, because in the feet of adults no two individuals are identical in form or in the nature of their distortions. I cannot construct perfect boots and shoes to fit any foot upon a last made for another, nor can I make it answer the purpose by patching it up with leather, the common practice of ignorant shoemakers. Perfect boots and shoes must be made upon perfect last-models of the feet of the wearer, just as a perfect-fitting set of artificial teeth must be made upon a perfect model of the mouth of the wearer, and not upon a model of another person's mouth, or without reference to anybody's mouth. Just as great accuracy is demanded in the one case as in the other, and for a man in Illinois to order a pair of number eight boots of average height of instep would be just as sensible as for him to write to a dentist for a set of teeth, telling him that his jaws were "two inches across and some hummockey."

The truth is simply this: That all human beings of adult age who would have perfect feet, who would be as proud of them as of their hands, who would know no more of trouble, or suffering, or annoyance with them than with their hands, must have all their boots and shoes made on my perfect-fitting lasts which I have made especially for them, and must have that pair of

lasts set aside for their sole and exclusive use. The question is, who should own this pair of lasts? Clearly they should be the sole property of the person for whose feet they are modeled. They should not be owned by me; and, in fact, I am not able to own them. I now own several thousand pairs of lasts which I have made to fit the feet of my customers. Every one of these customers ought to buy and own the lasts which I have modeled to fit their feet. Customers who read these words will make haste to become the owners of the lasts from which I have heretofore supplied them with satisfactory wearing apparel for their feet, as it is manifestly for his or her interest to do so.

I have no one but myself at present sufficiently skilled in the art, or who has sufficient genius, to make the lasts to fit the feet. I have perhaps thousands of customers who appreciate all this, and who are glad of the opportunity to own the lasts. Twenty-five thousand dollars—all of the profits of many years' hard labor—proves too large and heavy a burden for me to longer stagger under. I must lessen it, and to do this I request that all new and old customers become the owners of the lasts from which their boots and shoes are made. This will be but a trifle—five to ten dollars for each one of them. It will relieve me beyond expression. I ask for, and anticipate, a prompt response from all my friends to this suggestion.

JOEL McCOMBER.

52 East 10th St., New York, *Sept. 10th*, 1880.

WHAT I EXPECT.

By reference to the preface to the 10th edition of this little book, my suggestion that all who desire my patent boots and shoes made by me, and accordingly perfect in all respects, should buy and own the lasts which I have made or may make to fit their feet, will be noticed. As it is greatly to the advantage of all of my customers that they should own lasts made by me to fit their feet, I expect a favorable response from such as have not already paid for their lasts. But there are other things which I expect, because my great experience and success in saving and restoring feet entitles me to demand them. I expect to be allowed to be the judge as to the nature of the treatment required in any case. I look upon each person who seeks my aid as my patient as well as my patron, to whose sufferings and deformities I am to apply the remedial measures which are indicated, and who, when made whole through treatment, is to receive such instruction from me as will tend to save him from suffering and distortion in the future. No true physician will permit his patient to direct the treatment or prescribe the remedy. No more shall I. When the man in pain demands a sleeping potion, it is competent for the doctor to tell him that what he needs is not a narcotic, to blunt the edge of his pain, but an agent which shall remove the cause of such pain, and to refuse him the sedative. So, when my distorted patient asks me for a deformed, distorted covering for his abused feet, I am forced to say, "No, you must have what is right,

and you will get nothing else from me. I shall make your lasts so that the shoes made on them will fit your feet, will remedy their defects, will help to sustain their broken arches, will strengthen their weak and flaccid muscles, will restore to normal vigor their nerves of motion and sensation, will give freedom to the obstructed circulation, will encourage the enlarged joints to return to symmetry, and restore to perfect form and perfect usefulness this greatly maltreated portion of your frame. In doing this I will make your shoes as small and as attractive in appearance as is consistent with the comfort and restoration of your injured feet. But I will not torture them, nor will I permit you to be the judge of their shape. I know precisely what to do, and I must be allowed to do it in my own way, because my way is the best way—the only proper way. If you tell me that you wish the leather to exactly cover the inequalities of your maimed and irregular feet, I have to tell you, as long as your shoes exactly cover and bind together your warped feet, so long will they continue to be warped." The distortions can never be relieved or lessened by wedging the foot into a leather sheath, however closely the sheath may seem to fit. The foot must have entire freedom; every muscle must have free action; the blood must have free circulation; the nerves must not be restrained, and yet there must be support. Sustained by an adequate clasping of the softer parts of the waist, while having reasonable space for the free action of the active muscles and joints, the lost power and symmetry are restored. The idle, confined tissues die. It is only through muscular activity that

limbs and organs thrive. Surgeons sometimes affix to feeble limbs strong iron braces, and bands, and fixtures, in the vain hope of curing deformities which spring from lack of strength in the muscles and bones. I take off the iron braces and provide shoes instead, so balanced as to call into active use muscles before unused, bones which had been enfeebled by inaction, motor nerves which were benumbed for lack of employment. I compel the babies' limbs to grow in strength and vigor by the only method which has ever proved of the slightest value—by the only method which can prove of real value—by exercise, and the strength which exercise gives.

So I am not merely a shoemaker; my workmen are shoemakers, and I instruct them what to produce, in every case, to meet and overcome the existing evils. I am the surgeon, curing the evils of the foot, not with the scalpel (knife) but by scientific methods, and I expect to be the judge as to what those methods shall be, just the same as any other surgeon expects to exercise his judgment in all cases which are submitted to him for treatment.

My surgery is never the surgery of cutting with instruments; it is always conservative surgery. I do not cut because cutting is never necessary, and is, in fact, always exceedingly dangerous when applied to diseased feet. The deep cutting of a corn has repeatedly destroyed life. A slight puncture of the foot from a nail or other sharp instrument has often caused lockjaw and death. The paring of a bunion has sent many a person to the grave. No operations in surgery are more dangerous than cutting operations upon diseased feet.

and none are more painful. My methods of treating the diseased feet render all such dangerous treatment utterly unnecessary and useless.

CARE FOR THE FEET.

Feet are certain to become sore, inflamed and irritable under ordinary shoeing methods, and sometimes suffer from heat and irritation even when skillfully shod. Excessive walking under a hot sun or over rough paths will sometimes raise blisters or abrade the skin. Some feet perspire excessively, and unhealthy feet usually perspire more by far than any other portion of the body. This profuse sweating is in itself weakening, and is always an evidence of weakness or disease. It may safely be lessened by any application which will strengthen the flabby and flaccid tissues and give contractile tone to the capillaries through which the perspiration exudes. I have tried various applications for both these purposes, and all but one have proved useless. That one is an *infusion of bark*. It is entirely harmless, and thoroughly efficient, both in relieving all inflammation of the feet, increasing their muscular vigor, and in lessening the excess of perspiration from which they suffer. This tea or infusion may be applied daily with a sponge or the hand, and allowed to dry with the most comforting results. For the convenience of my customers, I have made a quantity of this infusion and put it in bottles with labels explaining its use, which bottles are sold at 50 cents and $1 each. In its

preparation I have added to the tea a small quantity of the aromatic bark of sassafras root, which is in itself an admirable healing astringent, and which imparts a pleasant aroma to the infusion.

I recommend this bark infusion to all who suffer from feeble or painful feet. If they wear boots or shoes made by any one but me, whether pretending to be made on McCombber's lasts or not, they need not expect permanent relief from their miseries through any local applications. There is no cure for the suffering and distortion caused by bad shoeing, except to cease to do evil and learn to do well, by which I mean that you must cease to abuse your feet with the old fashioned distorting and ruinous shoes, and restore your feet to health, strength, comfort and beauty, by the adoption of my perfect system. If you thus radically reform, your cure will be hastened and greatly facilitated by the application of the healing, sweetening, strengthening tonic bark-lotion to which I have alluded.

There are cases in which the individual leads a purely inactive life, riding instead of walking, remaining for days at a time shut up closely at home, leading a morbid, unnatural, unhappy existence. From such inactivity of body the feet suffer most of all. If these morbid recluses attempt to walk, their feet and ankles suffer torments because reasonable exercise is an uncommon event. The muscles and ligaments which should support and sustain the arches and the whole framework of the foot, become weak, and the heavy weight of the body spreads the boot far beyond its natural limits. The soft tissues are cut into by the bones; the nerves suffer from compression; the organs become intensely painful.

There is no elasticity of movement, no alertness of muscular motion. The bearing surfaces of the feet are changed as the badly balanced body toddles along on its nearly useless feet. The shoes, borne upon improperly in their turn, are speedily destroyed. The pulpy feet demand the softest material for their covering, and the yielding structure quickly goes to destruction under the lifeless, sprawling and stumbling tread. In cases of this description there can be no complete cure save through the strengthening power of gradually increasing exercise. A hand disused becomes useless in time, and the foot is no exception to this rule. Such useless stumps may be converted into good and useful feet by exercise which shall be slight at first, and shall increase daily, until a walk of a few miles shall be accomplished with as little inconvenience as would attend a walk of two blocks before the feet are restored to life and health. While nothing will take the place of exercise by walking, the *Bark Lotion* will greatly assist in the cure. It will strengthen and constringe the flabby tissues, will lift up and support the collapsed and weakened muscles, ligaments and tendons, which, in their weakness, have had to rely entirely upon the leather for support, and will thus lessen the girth of the feet and render them more natural in configuration. The flaccid muscles of the transverse arch and of the toes of the foot, thus drawn up, sustain the toes and hold the arch up as it is in its natural and vigorous unbroken condition, and the flat and unsightly object becomes, under proper treatment and when properly clothed, a thing of symmetry and beauty, as God designed it to be.

No deformed or diseased foot can possibly seem to be

as small or as elegant as it will when restored to a normal and healthy state. Therefore, the lady who takes pride in displaying small feet must see to it that they are kept perfectly healthy, perfectly shod, and perfectly sustained by the methods which I have here endeavored to set forth.

There is a disease known to stock-raisers as foot-rot, or "rot foot," from which sheep are particularly sufferers, and which utterly ruins them. Farmers are very unhappy when this destructive disease secures a hold upon their flocks, yet very many human beings suffer from a like complaint, without seeming to be conscious of its injurious character. The feet become feeble, withered, lacking in muscular and nerve power, semi-paralyzed, and almost useless as feet, by the bad treatment which they receive from shoemakers. This disease may as truthfully be called "foot rot" as that from which quadrupeds suffer. No church or public assemblage is free from the victims of this horrid foot disease. The sense of smell is outraged in every public conveyance. The air is polluted by it wherever civilized humanity congregates; the lungs are assailed by it, and the blood thereby poisoned in thousands of homes. The daily use of the bark infusion will strengthen the tissues and give a healthy tone to the diseased organs. The radical reform which I institute in the mode of constructing clothing for the feet will ultimately work a complete cure and the sufferer will no longer be abhorred and avoided, but will be welcomed where before he was treated with contempt.

INTRODUCTION.

A careful perusal of the following pages is respectfully requested of all who may receive this pamphlet. You will here find a full and plain explanation of the difference between my boots and shoes and those which are made on ordinary lasts, after the old and absurd fashion.

The attention of fathers and mothers is especially called to the subject of fitting their children with my shoes before the soft and tender foot becomes distorted. It is of the utmost importance that the natural and healthy foot be allowed to remain in its natural shape, that it may retain its proper and natural health. Do not consider it a waste of money to shoe your youngest children on scientific principles. You may buy absurd trash for the little ones, and consider it a stroke of economy; but remember, if you do, that you are committing a most disastrous error.

People who have crooked and distorted and painful feet, the result of long walking in crooked ways, in the faulty shoes of the past, must not be disappointed if their relief takes some little time. I am not a worker of miracles. I do not pretend to right in a day the wrongs of a lifetime. If I did I should be a quack, and would not be entitled to your confidence. But I will give you relief, and in the speediest manner consistent with doing it properly. Heretofore I have made none but the most super-excellent qualities of boots and shoes, of the most costly material, and I have been compelled to charge accordingly — still, however, endeavoring to keep my charges as low as the best workmanship and material would warrant. Nobody has ever yet complained of not getting from me the full worth of every dollar paid. If the price of my shoes has been a little higher than that of poor stock and poorly made slop goods, the shoes have worn longer and better, and have kept their shape

and their excellent appearance as long as they lasted. And yet, in obedience to a great popular demand, and in view of my very largely increased facilities for manufacturing, I shall hereafter furnish a grade of shoes at lower than my regular prices for first class goods. Let nobody think I am going to run into the cheap and good-for-nothing stuff, which is showy and unreliable My material will all be the best of its kind, and my work will all be hand-sewed, under my own personal direction. No poor or unsatisfactory work will be permitted to leave the establishment. The reputation which I have built up for superior and reliable work shall not suffer one jot.

I must remind the reader of one regulation which I have been forced to adopt—a reasonable one, to which no sensible person makes any objection. From all new customers who order from me *goods made to their measure, I must ask a deposit.* When you remember that in former years a disregard of this rule brought me to the very verge of bankruptcy, you will not consider this unreasonable. I have made a vast number of boots and shoes which have never been called for, and which have been left in my drawers by those who had ordered them. Most of these goods were fitted for special cases of distorted feet, and could not be worn except by the individuals for whom they had been made. For my general sales they were as useless as if they had been made for the hoofs of mules. I can guard against a repetition of this only by regularly enforcing my rule, whether to millionaires or other people. Some people are fraudulent; some are careless and thoughtless; some are whimsical. The strange mania for small feet causes many people to suppose that their feet can be made to look smaller than they really are by forcing them into

shoes which are a size too narrow and too short. The only way in which paralyzed and broken-down feet can be lessened in size is by holding the sprawling bones properly and kindly together, assisting the muscles which sustain the broken-down arches, and restoring to symmetry and elegance the much-abused and distorted extremities.

My price list, which is herewith given, shows my regular charges for boots and shoes made to fit feet which are reasonably healthy, and not too much misshapen. Where there is special and aggravated distortion, extra labor and expense are involved, and therefore an additional charge must be made. I make these charges in all cases as reasonable as possible, to cover the outlay of time, trouble and skill.

There is a considerable class of people, known as "Corn Doctors," who ought to be exterminated, and who will be, as soon as my improved boots and shoes are universally worn. They possess no art capable of curing the injuries to the feet which they pretend to "doctor." Those who wear my shoes never require to seek the temporary relief which they are able to afford. My system permanently cures this class of painful swellings and excrescences which the old-fashioned shoes induce. The old shoemaker is the best friend of the chiropodist, because, through the distortion which surely follows badly-shaped foot-clothing, the corn doctor derives his support. My cure is radical and painless. The corn dies out and never returns.

In subjoining my revised price-list, I wish to explain that the difference in the first and second grade, or choice, is represented in the cost of the skins made use of. The female skins are finer, tougher and more delicate, and cost fifteen to twenty per cent. more. From this grade

I make my first choice boots and shoes. No better stock than this can be found in the world.

My "second choice" goods are superior, alike in excellence of stock and workmanship, to the best goods of most shoemakers. I do not hire cheap workmen, nor make use of imperfect skins, nor do I palm off machine work in lieu of hand-sewed. I seek to provide substantial and elegant work, and to regulate the price according to the grade of stock made use of. I sell no goods made by others. Every pair of boots and shoes sent out by me are constructed under my own eye.

DIRECTIONS

FOR OUTLINING THE SOLES OF THE FEET, AND FOR MEASURING FEET,

FOR

McCOMBER'S PATENT BOOTS AND SHOES AND PATENT LASTS.

1st. After removing the shoes and stockings, stand erect upon a sheet of paper, bearing equal weight upon both feet; then draw a well-sharpened pencil around the foot, being careful to keep close to the bearing portions of the foot—in other words, draw the line close to that portion of the foot which comes in contact with the floor. Be very careful not to make the draft any wider or longer than the foot.' *Mark and measure both feet.*

2d. Place the stockings upon the feet and cross the legs, allowing the foot to be measured to hang naturally, and then with a tape measure take the seven measurements shown in the above illustration. Give the exact length in inches when standing with whole weight on the foot. Measure exactly upon the lines shown, and place the result in inches and fractions below. Allow the toes to hang during this measurement. The measure for ladies at C must pass around the calf of the leg at a point seven inches above the sole or bearing surface of the heel, while this measure for gentlemen should be taken sixteen inches above the bearing surface of the heel. The measure at B must be taken as follows: Stand up and bear the entire weight on the foot to be measured. Pass the strap around the foot diagonally, across the large joint or ball of the great toe, and around the outer ball—in other words, from ball to ball. Draw the strap close, and be particular that the whole weight is on the ball of the foot when this measure is taken. In giving the length, BE EXACT. I want the precise length of the feet—I make all allowances. Do not employ a shoemaker to take the measures; you can do better yourself. I shall follow carefully the measures which are sent me; but when measures are received which seem unreasonable, or which are imperfectly written out, I return them for correction. There is no danger of a misfit if the measurements and diagram are properly taken and properly recorded. Always write the name and residence of the person upon the diagram taken.

NOTICE.—If any bunions or other protuberances are upon the feet, mark their exact size upon the proper place in the diagram. If any points are particularly tender, mark and describe their location.

RIGHT FOOT.	LEFT FOOT.
Line C.....	*Line C*.....
Line A.....	*Line A*.....
Line D.....	*Line D*.....
Line H.....	*Line H*.....
Line I.....	*Line I*.....
Line W.....	*Line W*.....
Line B.....	*Line B*.....
Length.....	*Length*.....

Be very particular about taking the length. If this is not given, or is imperfectly given, I cannot make the Lasts. To insure accuracy, press the foot closely against the wall, bear the entire weight of the body on that foot; then stick a knife into the floor at the end of the longest toe, and then accurately measure the space between the wall and the knife. In measuring be sure that your tape measure or strap is first measured upon a carpenter's square or rule, and allowance made for the errors which always exist in tape measures.

Cash to accompany all Orders. I cannot send C. O. D.

PRICE LIST.

Lasts to Fit the Feet,....$5 to $10 per Pair.

MEN'S HAND-SEWED.

	First Choice.	Second Choice.
Men's French Calf Boots, Single Sole	$17	$15
Men's French Calf Boots, Double Sole	18	16
Men's French Calf Opera or Tongue Boots	20	18
Men's French Calf Boots, Cork Sole	20	18
Men's French Calf Button Boots, Single Sole	14	12
Men's French Calf Button Boots, Double Sole	15	13
Men's French Calf Congress Boots, Single Sole	14	12
Men's French Calf Congress Boots, Double Sole	15	13
Men's French Calf English Walking Shoes, Single Sole	14	12
Men's French Calf English Walking Shoes, Double Sole	15	13
Men's French Calf Laced Balmorals, Single Sole	14	12
Men's French Calf Laced Balmorals, Double Sole	15	13
Men's French Calf Oxford Ties, Single Sole	11	
Men's French Calf Oxford Ties, Double Sole	12	
Men's French Calf Strap Shoes, Single Sole	11	
Men's French Calf Strap Shoes, Double Sole	12	
Men's French Kid Shoes of all kinds, $2 extra.		
Men's Turkish Slippers	5	
Men's Plain Morocco Slippers	5	

LADIES' HAND-SEWED.

Ladies' French Dress Kid Button Boots, Single Sole	$10
Ladies' French Dress Kid Button Boots, Double Sole	11
Ladies' French Mat or Glove Kid Button Boots, Single Sole	10
Ladies' French Mat or Glove Kid Button Boots, Double Sole	11
Ladies' French Mat or Glove Kid Button Boots, Cork Soles	13
Ladies' French Kid, super extra, Parlor Dress	11

PRICE LIST.

	First Choice.	Second Choice.
Ladies' French Pebble Kid or Goat Button Boots, Single Sole	10	9
Ladies' French Pebble Kid or Goat Button Boots, Double Sole	11	10
Ladies' French Pebble Kid or Goat Button Boots, Cork Sole	13	12
Ladies' French Calf Button Boots, Single Sole	11	10
Ladies' French Calf Button Boots, Double Sole	12	11
Ladies' French Calf Button Boots, Cork Sole	14	13
Ladies' American Kid or Goat Button Boots, Single Soles	9	8
Ladies' American Kid or Goat Button Boots, Double Sole	10	9
Ladies' Serge, foxed with French Kid, Button Boots, Single Sole	10	9
Ladies' Serge, foxed with American Kid, Button Boots, Single Sole	9	8
Ladies' Serge (plain) Button Boots, Single Sole	10	9
Ladies' Satin Française, foxed with Kid, Button Boots, Single Sole	10	
Ladies' French Mat and Dress Kid Low Button Shoes, Single Sole	8	
Ladies' French Pebble Kid and Goat Low Button Shoes, Single Sole	8	
Ladies' French Mat and Dress Kid Newport Ties, Single Sole	8	
Ladies' French Mat and Dress Kid Low Laced Shoes, Single Sole	8	
Ladies' French Mat and Dress Kid Turn Slippers, Trimmed	5	
Ladies' Morocco Turn Slippers, Trimmed	4	
Ladies' French Mat and Dress Kid Turn Slippers, not Trimmed	4 50	

BOYS' HAND-SEWED.

Boys' French Calf Boots, from size 1 to 3 inclusive, Single Sole	11	9
Boys' French Calf Boots, from size 1 to 3 inclusive, Double Sole	12	10
Boys' French Calf Boots, from size 3½ to 5½ inclusive, Single Sole	13	10
Boys' French Calf Boots, from size 3½ to 5½ inclusive, Double Sole	14	11
Boys' French Calf Button Boots, 1 to 3 inclusive, Single Sole	8	6

PRICE LIST.

	First Choice.	Second Choice.
Boys' French Calf Button Boots, 1 to 3 inclusive, Double Sole	9	7
Boys' French Calf Button Boots, 3½ to 5½ inclusive, Single Sole	10	7
Boys' French Calf Button Boots, 3½ to 5½ inclusive, Double Sole	11	8
Boys' French Calf Congress Boots, 1 to 3 inclusive, Single Sole	8	5
Boys' French Calf Congress Boots, 1 to 3 inclusive, Double Sole	9	6
Boys' French Calf Congress Boots, 3½ to 5½ inclusive, Single Sole	9	6
Boys' French Calf Congress Boots, 3½ to 5½ inclusive, Double Sole	10	7
Boys' French Calf Laced Balmoral, 1 to 3 inclusive, Single Sole	8	6
Boys' French Calf Laced Balmoral, 1 to 3 inclusive, Double Sole	9	7
Boys' French Calf Laced Balmoral, 3½ to 5½ inclusive, Single Sole	9	7
Boys' French Calf Laced Balmoral, 3½ to 5½ inclusive, Double Sole	10	8
Boys' French Calf Oxford Ties, 1 to 3 inclusive, Single Sole	7	4
Boys' French Calf Oxford Ties, 1 to 3 inclusive, Double Sole	8	5
Boys' French Calf Oxford Ties, 3½ to 5½ inclusive, Single Sole	8	7
Boys' French Calf Oxford Ties, 3½ to 5½ inclusive, Double Sole	9	8
Youths' French Calf Button Boots, from 10 to 13½, Single Sole	7	5
Youths' French Calf Button Boots, from 10 to 13½, Double Sole	8	6
Youths' French Calf Congress Boots, from 10 to 13½, Single Sole	7	4
Youths' French Calf Congress Boots, from 10 to 13½, Double Sole	8	5

MISSES' HAND-SEWED.

Misses' French Dress and Mat Kid Button Boots, from 12 to 2	7
Misses' French Dress and Mat Kid Lace Boots, from 12 to 2	7
Misses' French Pebble Kid or Goat Button Boots, from 12 to 2	6

	First Choice.	Second Choice.
Misses' French Pebble Kid or Goat Lace Boots, from 12 to 2	6	
Misses' American Pebble Goat and Morocco Button Boots, from 12 to 2		5
Misses' American Pebble Goat and Morocco Lace Boots, from 12 to 2		5

CHILDREN'S HAND-SEWED.

Children's French Dress and Mat Kid Button Boots, from 6 to 9½	3 50	
Children's French Dress and Mat Kid Pebble Boots, from 10 to 11½		4 50
Children's French Dress and Mat Kid Lace Boots, from 6 to 9½	3 50	
Children's French Pebble Kid Button Boots, from 6 to 9½	3 00	
Children's French Pebble Kid Button Boots, from 10 to 11½		4 00

INFANTS' HAND-SEWED.

Infants' French Mat and Pebble Kid Button Boots, from 1 to 5½	1 50	
Infants' French Mat and Pebble Kid Lace Boots, from 1 to 5½	1 50	

AN ADDRESS

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

Polytechnic Branch of the American Institute of the City of New York, May 20th, 1875,

ON

THE HUMAN FOOT:

ITS USE, ABUSE AND PRESERVATION,

BY JOEL McCOMBER.

Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen:

It is always a matter of congratulation to me who have faith in ideas, particularly when they have passed the ordeal of practical experience, to be able to lay them before an intelligent audience, accustomed to a rigid scrutiny and hard logic, unbiassed by prejudices or emotions—my subject being: "The Human Foot, its use, abuse and preservation." On this theme, however, I fear that the heaviest thinking has been stimulated by the feelings, and those, too, not always of gentle nature, nor finding expressions in the language of delicacy. It is from this kind of *compulsory education* that I believe better knowledge can give us liberty; and perhaps there is no better invocation of your attention than is to be found in the utterances of Solomon, that wise man of antiquity:

"Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established. Thou shalt then walk in thy way safely, and thy feet shall not stumble. Happy is the man that

findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding. Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom, and with all thy getting, get understanding."

The largest portion of human wisdom is turned to the acquisition of wealth; the remainder, with the aid of this accumulated wealth, is devoted to the procurement of ease, comfort, and freedom from suffering. It is, however, a notorious and universal experience, that by far the most prolific sources of human misery spring from what are known as the "minor evils" of life—those goading, petty, carking annoyances, from which, like the fabled gad-fly, escape seems impossible.

These "ills" are often considered, and really are supposed to be, "necessary evils;" but let it be remarked that the artificial and acquired are always sure to be classed alike with the unavoidable.

There are armies of heroes in society who can breast calamity and oppression, pass courageously through untold affliction, and vanquish giants of oppression, who readily fall helpless and suffering victims to aching joints, and crippled feet. No wisdom or courage can maintain its equipoise under the demoralization begotten in the nervous system by the steady irritation of just such insignificant causes. Not even the ancient stoics would have dared to hazard their powers of endurance thus. They wisely betook themselves to sandals, and escaped this terrible ordeal to their philosophy.

Nor is it possible to exaggerate the sad changes, and limitations wrought in human character and conduct which owe their origin to the permanent martyrdom growing out of the widespread ignorance, and consequent sad mutilation of those indispensable organs, which are to sustain, year after year, the weight and dignity of the human body.

In such bondage even the noble brain is tethered, the hand shortened, the body shackled, the whole active business of life crippled, happiness destroyed, and life itself dwarfed to a miserable existence.

Surely, then, next to the "getting of understanding," is the paramount necessity of getting something to *stand* upon, and thus of something to *go upon!* otherwise the bounding joys of youth may remain a boon for the unshod poor peasant boy; they cannot be for the pampered child of wealth, education and refinement.

Nor are the delightful walks of contemplation, or the sauntering hours of meditation, to be anticipated among the luxuries of refinement and the blessings of culture under adult life. Human joy is not the crop which outraged nature grows; and let the pangs and distortions of premature dotage tell of how much of its additional and unnecessary misery is due to the neglect of our ancestors, and to the gross—nay, barbarous—ignorance of untutored artisans, the unwitting cause of a refined and torturing cruelty, of which the most unmitigated savage would blush to be known as the author. Now, the human foot, in its natural form and comeliness, is one of the most beautiful objects for contemplation. Its graceful lines of curvature, its lithe and supple tissues, its fairy lightness and delicacy of construction, combined with its immense capacities for sustaining weight, and executing intricate movements, render it at once a mechanism of surpassing wonder and admiration.

No artificial substitute, in case of loss, has ever approached the original: and, at best, all such efforts have proved but clumsy and inadequate makeshifts.

But few eyes have ever rested upon a perfect foot—so unavoidably are those physical and organic defects perpetuated and handed down from parent to offspring—the

sad heritage of ignorance, for which no patrimony can compensate.

Yet, even in this state of imperfection, the foot of an infant is still beautiful; and, while it escapes the deforming grasp of the modern shoe, continues to exhibit those wondrous capacities which, alas! are certain to succumb to subsequent abuse. Thus it happens that a healthy, well-formed, natural foot, at adult age, is the rarest of exhibitions; whilst a secure tread, a safe step, a firm gait and graceful carriage, with ease and comfort, without fatigue and suffering, are certainly not often to be met.

Experience of surgeons proves that a large proportion of sprained joints, ruptured ligaments and fractured limbs, are the legitimate consequence of defective, deformed and weakened feet. All this is the direct result of failure to comprehend the simple and beautiful mechanism of the organs of locomotion, or to understand the anatomy of the foot as a magnificent series of arches, perfectly adapted to sustain the weight of the body, whilst, in the capacity of a living and growing machine, it enables us to move about with comfort and facility, in obedience to our wishes and necessities.

It has been a very old habit among human beings to ignore the study of their own bodies; and even among those learned and thoughtful men who have given much heed to head, lungs and stomach, few have expended attention upon these indispensable organs—the feet, which long since passed over to the tender mercies of charlatans, and corn doctors. It was once the fashion to discourage all such investigations. Even dissections—the absolute and only source of such knowledge—were contrary to law; while, within a comparatively short period, both in civilized Europe, and Amer-

Ica, antiquity forbade it entirely. The work itself is unpleasant and uninviting, except to the enthusiast seeking for truth at the hazard of his own life, and at the sacrifice of ease and gain. Yet to these relatively few, the world owes all its enjoyments to-day from the contributions of science, and, though they are free gifts of knowledge to humanity, it is curious to note how perseveringly the fight has been carried on for every inch of recognition against stolid prejudice, ignorance, habit, custom and fashion. So difficult is it even now to induce the world to be logical, that it must be strenuously urged, by argument and proof, to examine, and almost coaxed to accept, any novel measure for the mitigation of its wretchedness. But a word must be allowed in explanation on this point; for arrogant pretenders have so often vaunted their bootless offerings under the specious name of "anatomical" foot coverings, that some confiding people have come to realize, through suffering, too much of their own anatomy, and thus nearly made the personal acquaintance of their own skeletons.

But whilst it is difficult to overstate the misery of ill-fitting foot-gear, it is but natural that the deceived should be doubting, incredulous and suspicious. Every new invention in its progress to the attainment of better methods, must be prepared to encounter this ordeal, competing, as it does, with invested pecuniary interest; and displacing, as it must, (if of intrinsic value) those inferior and barbarous productions, to which suffering men, women and children have so long made a lucrative but *forced* contribution. I gladly accept the conditions, firmly believing that human nature will not continue to obey the poetical mandate, "suffer and be strong," when they once find out, that science can make them stronger without suffering, and that, too, quickly, plea-

santly and at no additional money cost for precisely the same material, cut and made up upon correct principles, and guaranteed to give comfort and satisfaction the first time it is put on; whilst if made up, however costly, artistically or fashionably, upon the old, false, blundering, hap-hazard system, it can only end in a refinement of cruelty worthy of the famous inquisition itself.

A single trial would forever cut off all competition with the better method which science has now brought to light, and which skill and ample experience have established, beyond all question, to be the best, because its foundation rests on the established laws of Omnipotence. The humanity of the age is now interesting itself to protect the lower animal creation from cruel treatment—cruel to the beast, and brutalizing to the man! We, who (from ignorance or necessity) have become martyrs to distorted feet, invested with corns, bunions and painful ingrowing nails, hardly think that all this misery did not spring up in a day, but was the slow growth of many years, dating back to childhood. Nor do we reflect that we are deliberately and systemically preparing for the dear children committed to our care, the same horrible infliction. No, we are not brutal enough for that; we simply *never* think; perhaps we know no better; possibly never had our attention arrested by the immense fact, that all this is now unnecessary and (what is more to the point) *unjustifiable* suffering. Only take the trouble to look and convince yourselves. Just for one moment reflect that it is not suffering alone, or peevishness, or ill temper, or a brain pre-occupied and exhausted by the constant physical irritation of *pain*, for which you become responsible; but danger, actual jeopardy to life as well as limb! It is now an incontrovertible fact, which rests upon the most ad-

vanced judgment, that among the most serious maladies which imperil childhood are those finding their roots in this very condition of the nervous system, engendered by a disordered circulation in the feet, which are most remote from the heart, where it is most feeble and least able to bear disturbance.

Thus, the over-sensitive brain becomes seriously linked with the feet—the head with "the understanding." Hereafter abstain from punishing your child as a dunce or "incorrigible," until you find out by competent authority, that you yourself are not the unconscious cause of the sad havoc which is being from day to day perpetrated upon the innocent, physical, mental and moral character Learn, if need be, by your own experience, to commiserate the helpless dependents upon your sympathy and good offices. But even adults need pay tribute no longer; for now the worst deformities which arise from the prolonged use of ill-fitting shoes may find relief by ceasing to fight against nature and her laws, to which the McComber Last owes all its acknowledged superiority, and upon which alone an accurately-fitting boot or shoe can be manufactured, which will prove as comfortable at the start as the old one it replaces; unlike the old one, which bruised, mangled and maltreated the sensitive foot in that terrible process of "breaking in." The new shoe receives that abused organ like a tender mother, clasps it gently, and deals so kindly with it that, whilst soothed into quietude and gradually losing that exquisite sensibility which excited it to rebellion, it is brought not only into a state of reliable utility, but, under this benign and natural treatment, actually regains a portion of that form and comeliness to which the majority of human feet are strangers. There is no longer consistency in ridiculing the ignorant Indian who flat-

tens his child's head with a board, nor the heathen Chinese who willfully deforms the feet of his offspring with bandages of calico, whilst Christian people, in the nineteenth century, effect precisely the same result with *leather*. But, aside from the question of discomfort, the æsthetic world is coming to find out that the path to beauty lies in the ways of nature; and not in the strange ways of arbitrary fashion, which, on the same principle, would cut down all tall men and women, whilst stretching out the short ones, by way of bringing about a general style of systematic beauty. Who ever admired the awkward attempts of French arbor-culturists to improve upon nature, by shearing those graceful heads of waving leaves into round, oval, square, stiff, ungainly masses? And yet that is just what shoemakers have been trying to do with the human feet, under the name of "beautifying;" and the only method nature adopts to correct such morbid conceptions of beauty is, by the infliction of that suffering which inevitably follows the combined infraction of her laws. Health and beauty must abide together.

The power and efficacy of the foot is also destroyed or largely lessened by the unnatural pressure. If you would prove this, let me ask you who have worn the old-fashioned shoe for a lifetime, to experiment with your toes and see how much strength they possess. Of course, they should be vigorous and powerful; they should possess muscular force sufficient to support the entire weight of the body; but the wedging, cramping system of the old last destroys the power of the toes, by inducing partial paralysis—for any physician will tell you that absolute loss of power may be brought about by long continued pressure—renders natural, elegant, graceful and unrestrained locomotion impossible, and induces

more suffering than any other error that can be named.

It is safe to say that no single subject is of greater interest or importance to civilized human beings than the construction of covering for the feet; for our northern climate, with its great extremes of temperature, its diversified seasons, and its sudden changes, it is necessary that our foot clothing should be adapted to a variety of conditions. Especially is it desirable that the feet should be protected from cold and moisture, and from sudden extreme and prolonged changes of temperature, as well as from those injuries, which locomotion among harsh and rude substances would surely occasion. For the protection of the feet from violence and climatic exposures, it has been found desirable to cover them with the prepared skins of animals. This formed the earliest foot-clothing of which we have any knowledge, and has been employed in all ages, alike by the savage and the civilized. Science has not been able to surpass it by the use of any manufactured fabric. To-day, as in all the past, "there's nothing like leather," from which to fabricate the needed clothing for the feet. Its excellences are many; and if it were the custom of shoemakers intelligently to mould their foot-clothing so that the members which they clothe would not be distorted thereby, and to use the best skins, properly prepared, nothing more could be desired. But the truth is, that very imperfect material is constantly employed, and the form into which that material is wrought has been, among all civilized nations, radically wrong, having very slight reference to the form of the foot, and still less to the various duties imposed upon it.

There is no exaggeration in saying, that in all the shoe stores in the great city of New York, and in all the

factories of Europe, you will not find one pair of boots or shoes, made on the ordinary last, which ought to be worn by any human being. They are all wrong, radically and totally wrong. It matters not for what class, age, sex or condition they are designed, the good or bad quality of the material entering into them counts for nothing; the price asked is of no consequence; the rude or the artistic workmanship has no bearing upon the subject; the fact that they are worthless, and worse than worthless, as clothing for the human feet, remains. They may be coarsely made, of worthless material, by machinery, and sell for a few shillings; or into their construction may enter the choicest, most carefully prepared and most delicate skins, and the most skillful handiwork, and the price may be enormous; still they are worse than valueless, because they are certain to inflict permanent evil, if not immediate misery, upon the unfortunate wearers.

From the distortion and deformity induced by the abominable shoes of the ordinary construction, which are almost in universal use, no age is spared. The torture and misery begin in infancy. As soon as the child begins to creep, a pair of leather cases are drawn upon the delicate, symmetrical and yielding feet. Every mother knows that the little boot which she ties upon the baby's foot is no more fitted to it than is the little sock which has preceded it. She knows, too, that it ought to be fitted with greater accuracy, because the material entering into it is comparatively rigid and unyielding, and is, therefore, capable of compressing the delicate structure, while the loose knitted sock readily adapts itself to the foot. In the case of the sock, the foot adapts it without difficulty; in the case of the shoe, the rigid leather distorts the foot to its own wretched proportion. The tottering child is ex-

pected to learn to walk with its feet thus constrained; and thanks to the fact that the poorest and most spongy leather is worked up for children. The distortion thus commenced is, however, kept up; the foot is bent unnaturally; the toes are crammed upon one another; the great toe is forced backward upon the smaller ones; an enlarged joint is commenced; an incipient bunion is projected; a permanent crop of corns is organized; and ample provision is thus early made for all the fearful distortion and terrible torture to which the race has been subjected from the beginning.

I do not propose to discuss here the subject of club-foot, and other deformities which exist at birth. There is, however, much testimony to the effect that the sufferings of the mother, from badly constructed shoes, have entailed life-long deformity upon the child. Thoughtful physiologists say that the physical condition of the mother is not without marked influence upon the offspring, and nothing is more fully established than the doctrine of inherited physical and mental tendencies and conditions. The feet of all who wear shoes are deformed, and there is no exception to this rule. This deformity is towards *talipes* or club feet. The feet of the civilized nations may be said to be gradually changing from symmetry to deformity; and even now deformity has become the rule, and symmetry the exception.

I should like to preach to all parents a sermon, which they would remember. I should like to tell them how infinitely more important it is, that their children should be provided with properly formed foot-clothing, than that their own feet should be intelligently attired. I know of no missionary work of a secular character of anything like equal importance. To-day the ignorantly shod foot of every adult is mal-formed, and will never be restored

to the absolute symmetry of undistorted nature. But for the infant who has not inherited deformity, and who has never yet been consigned to the distorting vice of ignorantly moulded shoes, there would be hope, if the parents would but reflect and reason, and act accordingly. They must just give up all idea of learning anything from the shoemaker, however fashionable or however high-priced. Upon the shape of his last depends, of course, the interior form of the structure to be worn. His last bears only a remote resemblance to the human foot. There is not one foot in the universe to which the lasts which have been in use since the dawning of civilization are adapted; yet the shoemaker solemnly measures the foot, and then passes his strap around these blocks of wood, and is content if the dimensions correspond. Perhaps he causes the customer to stand on a sheet of paper while he outlines the foot with a pencil, and then proceeds to build the foot-clothing upon some incoherent idea of his own with reference to the outline, and the block of wood, which he applies to it with owl-like gravity. He has no system; he is utterly at sea. If he seeks to remedy the deformity which he, or some of his ignorant predecessors has created, he endeavors to accomplish the result by piling leathers upon the wretched last, the only means which occurs to his benighted understanding. Nor can the knowledge needed be gathered from books. The literature of the world is silent upon this topic. To be sure, some books have been written to show that the world is all at fault in the method of constructing foot-clothing, and some attempts have been made by well meaning writers, particularly in England, to effect a reform in this important matter; but no book has yet been issued which reaches the remedy, even in a remote degree. Cuts of deformed feet are numerous enough, and pictures

of foot-gear which the authors verily suppose will remedy the defects may be seen; but one and all are based upon incorrect ideas, and leave the whole subject precisely where they found it, in a perfect muddle, with no sound philosophy upon which to base reforms, the necessity for which is certain to be universally acknowledged. I allude to the writings of Camper, Hale, Dowie, Meyer, and others, and to an anonymous book entitled, "The Feet," published by Wells, of New York, in 1871. All these works contain considerable curious information, and all assert the well-known facts of universal pedal deformity, but not one of them proposes any system of relief which is based upon scientific truth, and not one rises above absurdity in its consideration of the appropriate remedy. Their authors, with a uniformity consistent with their sublime ignorance of the subject, treat the human foot as an unchangeable member, forgetting that a foot in repose is a very different thing from a foot in motion, and that this essential difference varies with the kind and degree of duty imposed upon the marvelous structure. In their ignorance they would shoe the yielding foot of the human being as they would the horny and immovable hoof of the horse.

The so-called "anatomical bootmakers" are groping along by guess-work, precisely as are their less pretentious and equally benighted brethren. It is slow work to attempt to educate a thoughtless world up to a great principle, but it is infinitely more laborious to strive to open a crevice for the ingress of a trifle of common sense to the brains of unreasoning mechanics. If the success of this revolutionary improvement of mine depended upon the shoemakers, I should give up in despair. They do not reason or reflect. There is not one custom shoemaker in New York to-day who can tell you

at what point the upper portion of your new shoes, which you have not yet forced into some resemblance to the form of your feet, will bulge out or overhang the sole on the outer side, after you have worn them, until they are fairly (so-called) broken in, but really broken over ; and yet, if they understood the first rational principle of shoemaking, they could tell you with their eyes shut. The fact is, if the shoes were properly constructed, they would not tread over at all.

I have said that I did not propose to educate the shoemakers up to my principles. To the public I leave this herculean task. I am confident, however, that I can convince the public that there is relief in store for them from the torture which nobody desires, and that the shoemakers will be forced to comprehend what the world demands. It is this system of compulsory education that I am seeking to advance, and my converts are daily increasing. I wish I could impress a few important facts upon the public mind. The most important of these facts is, THAT DEFORMITY OF THE FEET IS UNIVERSAL, and will be until young people are properly shod. A foot once crippled can never be fully restored to a normal state. It is astonishing to what extent crippled feet induce ill temper, peevishness and meanness. Show me a man whose feet have been excessively distorted by the blundering of shoemakers, and, if he is not an angel, I will show you a most uncomfortable companion, a most irritable and selfish husband and father, and a most disagreeable person altogether. He is the worst customer a man can have. His whole moral nature seems to partake of the distortion of his bodily extremities. It is impossible to please him. I do not seek the patronage of this class that are entirely beyond redemption, although I do not refuse it. I will do all in my power to alleviate their

sufferings. I prefer, however, that they should give their patronage to the class of shoemakers who have deformed their feet and made life miserable for them. I prefer to provide clothing for that very large class—the moderately deformed. For them there is hope. Especially would I seek to begin with children, and thus secure for the rising race symmetry and comfort. But to convince parents that they are doing their children a grievous wrong by allowing them to wear the brutal foot coverings in common use, is difficult. They think the ill-formed slop goods of the shop good enough for the child. Why is this? How shall we account for the thoughtlessness of parents in this regard. Would they allow their children to wear gloves which deformed their hands and destroyed their power and usefulness? By no means. Yet to save trouble and the necessity of reflecting upon the subject, they will allow and compel their children to suffer misery, and permanent deformity in the way which I have indicated. It would seem as if the misery which parents endure would induce them to secure relief at any sacrifice for their offspring. The public have yet another lesson to learn. By their unfair course they compel absolute dishonesty on the part of shoemakers. They ask comfortable and excellent boots and shoes, made of first-class material, for less than the price of the leather and journeymen's wages for making them. The shoemaker is compelled to deceive them into the belief that he uses the best French Ulmo calf skin in a ten or twelve dollar boot—a thing impossible. Articles made by machinery, of shoddy material, quite unfit to be worn, are palmed off for fine hand-sewed goods, and this because a fair price is grudged, and good work and good material cannot be supplied for the price paid. In nothing more

than in boots and shoes is "the best the cheapest." If poor leather is used the goods are quite worthless. If the fit is bad, the pressure and strain exercised by the foot materially lessen the wearing capacity. A badly formed boot must be a comparatively short-lived boot, though not as short-lived as it ought to be, since it ought never to have existed at all, and would not, but for the ignorance of the public, and the profound stupidity of the maker

The improvements which I have effected in the construction of the last upon which clothing for the feet is to be made, are readily seen by a comparison of the old and new methods. The old last is not made upon any defined plan or system. It does not resemble the foot, nor does it resemble anything else except itself. It is a nondescript structure, an anomaly, a monstrosity. It has length and thickness ; it is square and round and oval ; but it has very little in common with the human foot. You may ask a thousand shoemakers why they mould shoes over these unphilosophical blocks of wood, and they will all fail to give you a reasonable response. I venture to assert, that there never was a shoe made upon the old-fashioned last for our grandfathers, or their grandfathers, which presented an interior space shaped like any human foot in the world. Centuries have witnessed no important changes in this matter. The space may be large enough, too large, indeed; but it will surely be improperly arranged. Where there should be little room, there will be much ; where space should exist for solid bone, space will be lacking ; where the leather should permit muscular expansion of the foot in action, there will be compression and contraction ; where the fabric should cling closely, it will be loose and slouchy. In a general way, it may be said that

the old last is a wedge, and that the shoe moulded over it presents a wedge-shaped interior. The feet, forced into this wedge-shaped sack of leather, are certain to be distorted, while the sack is, in turn, sure to be stretched out of its original shape, if the foot has any vigor remaining.

My last is also made of wood, and has dimensions. In arriving at these dimensions a distinct method is employed. The aim is to provide an interior space, which the foot shall exactly fill, without restraint at any point, except at the waist. Here a close fit is indispensable. The foot, clasped securely around the waist (the smallest part of the instep) is free at the toes to perform all its natural motions with ease. If the toes are compressed and the waist left loose, no such natural movement is possible, but all grace, ease and dignity of motion are lost.

If you will examine this last, you will discover that the tread or sole portion is moved outwardly. This change of position for the sole amounts to an average of about one inch. The fact is, the world has not heretofore walked on the *soles* of shoes, but upon soles and uppers alike. If you will hold up any shoe which has been worn long enough to take a shape which it did not originally possess, you will invariably notice, that the upper leather bulges far beyond the sole on the outside. So great is this tendency that, in the case of shoes made of soft and yielding material—such as enters into the construction of slippers—the upper, striking the ground in walking, will be quickly worn through along the outer line of the sole. If the sole were absolutely *under* the bearing surface of the foot, this could not occur, for at this point the foot spreads when in action, and just here the expansion

of the transverse arch of the foot must be provided for. You can only provide for this expansion by giving the expanding foot a sole to rest upon.

In all other lasts, the thickest portion is placed in the centre. Nature does not indicate that it should be in the centre; but some barbarous shoemaker in the past centuries decided that it made no difference where the thickness was placed so that the block of wood was of the proper girth. He made *his* last so, and this connecting link between the dark ages of the world and modern civilization has been sacredly preserved.

My last follows nature's lines. I drop the outer portion of the shank to nature's model, instead of hollowing it up unnaturally. The instep is exactly over a line drawn from the centre of the heel to the outer portion of the largest toe, naturally, and I carry the sole *underneath*, along the inner line of the large ball, precisely as nature has ordained. The large ball thus overhangs the tread, or bearing point of the sole. In the construction of shoes upon this last, it is as if you stood upon a piece of sole leather, trimmed to the outline of the bearings of the foot, and had the upper leather elegantly moulded to cover and protect its upper portion. This is the whole secret—conformity to nature and her laws. In this conformity a solid bone requires a comfortable resting space; a system of muscles, liable to be drawn upon for active service, have room for expansion, without being cramped, without occasioning injury to the adjacent parts, and without working deformity. The *sole*, in a word, must be placed under the foot and not partly under it, and partly beyond its bearing outline.

I need not further dwell upon the misery which the foot suffers through unequal pressure. In its *best* estate

the human foot energetically rebels against the evils which it strives so vainly to escape. Its protests are uttered in no uncertain language, and it is because of these protests that a better system has been studied out.

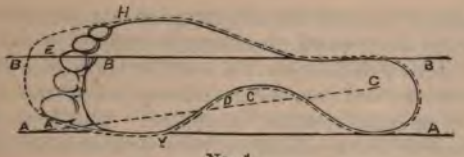
There are, however, feet which suffer distortion yet do not suffer pain in any great degree. These are the most unfortunate cases of all, as no warning cry of agony comes to demand relief for the abused feet. The suffering which accompanies the maltreatment of our bodies is important and salutary. It is the sentinel guarding the wonderful human fabric with sleepless vigilance, and telegraphing to the brain all unfair encroachments. Let no one who has worn boots and shoes from infancy to maturity claim that his feet are perfect, simply because he has not suffered greatly. It will be found, in such cases, that the undue and unequal pressure has so far paralyzed the nerves as to render them insensible to abuse. The circulation has been impeded, and sensitiveness has given place to obtuseness. Instead of "breaking in" the shoe, the foot itself has been broken in, and in losing its symmetry has lost also its desire and its ability to complain. It becomes the worst victim to the unholy warfare waged by ignorance, because an unresisting one. The worst foot is the foot which wears whatever leathern thing the shoemaker puts upon it, and never complains. The best foot is the active, vigorous one, which openly rebels—in corns and bunions and bad nails and sore places—against the cruel treatment. For this there is a certainty of salvation; for the other there is little hope. In most cases of deadened sensibility it will be found that the trouble has been wrought in infancy and in childhood. It is then that the superior judgment of the observing parent should be exercised, to save the little one from distortion and lasting

injury. Excessive pressure upon any part deprives it of the power of feeling, if applied long enough. It is the duty of the parent then to see to it that the child is protected in this regard, as distorti n begun during the years of growth is never wholly recovered from.

I call upon the public to investigate more fully this all-important subject. I know precisely what the result will be, because I have observed the effect of a comprehension of the magnitude of my improvements by thousands of highly intelligent persons. The system speaks for itself ; it is only necessary for the seeker of knowledge to place himself in a position to hear and understand. I have been striving after absolute perfection in this direction for more than thirty years. The number of my converts and customers lead me to believe that it has been attained. I do not know of one among them all who would be willing to forego the comfort already experienced.

My system for clothing the feet is widely admitted to be a boon to humanity, and only needs examination and use to find universal appreciation and adoption. It has secured the endorsement of the most competent authority, as the best and only successful attempt to perfect boots and shoes for human feet, in accordance with those natural laws upon which they are constructed. It is, therefore, confidently and earnestly commended to the attention of all intelligent and rational persons, who value their own comfort, with the certain assurance that personal experience of its inestimable blessings will urge them to extend its usefulness among their suffering fellow-creatures.

Let me ask your attention to some diagrams which I have prepared, in order to exemplify more clearly the advantages of my system. In No. 1, I show you the outline of the bottom of a natural, undistorted human foot, indicated by the inner unbroken line. Outside of this you will



No. 1.

observe a dotted line. This represents the sole of my last. The line extending from A to A, I call the base line. A curious fact here appears. If you take a perfect human foot (a rare thing to find) and draw a line from the inner side of the bearing of the heel, touching the bearing of the ball or large joint of the great toe, the line will be found to touch that toe throughout its entire length until you reach the point where it begins to round off at the nail. But as the natural position of the great toe, without the stocking on, is to stand off from the second toe, from three-eights to one-half inch and as it involves an unnecessary space between i

No. 2.

and the second toe—as will be seen by diagram No. 2—I slightly swing the great toe over, as it would be when the stocking is on, so that it nearly touches its fellow without being compressed. If I were to allow for this useless space in making my last, I should provide considerable waste room and waste leather, besides giving a very awkward appearance to the shoe. I do not force the great toe beyond the natural swing of

the joints ; I merely take advantage of that natural swing to carry the toe towards its nearest neighbor. Some writers have urged that the great toe must be allowed to stand off from the second toe, as in infancy, when the toes are sprawling in all possible directions. This is a fallacy. At maturity the muscular and bony structures are found to have grown firm, the tendons and ligaments are solidified, and the entire foot has become as it were consolidated. The toes cannot be pinched or compressed, without inducing misery and an awkward gait; but they can be placed in direct and gentle apposition or approximation to each other without injury to themselves, without obstruction to the natural movements of the body, and without in any degree lessening their powers of usefulness.

I now draw a second line, extending, as will be noticed, from B to B. This runs exactly parallel with the line extending along the inner side of the foot, and equi-distant from it the width of the heel. This I call the sole line. You will observe that this line leaves out more than two of the toes, and nearly one-third of the width of the foot. In making my last the sole is extended outward, or, so to speak, is pushed along sideways under the foot all the way from the heel to the toe, thus placing sufficient bearing surface beyond the sole line for the foot when in action. This, in all cases, provides width on the outside for the spread of the foot, which is bound to occur, as the expansion of the transverse arch of the foot, from the nature of the structure, when standing or walking, must be provided for; and if no provision is made, it will take place against the upper leather, and induce infinite suffering ; corns will come on the outside of the small toe, or between the toes, and every step will add to the deformity.

In the old last no provision whatever has been made for this expansion—no allowance for the use of the muscles of the foot—while at the same time, a natural foot, the transverse arch of which has not been weakened or destroyed by the old shoe, will spread three times as much in the old shoe as in shoes made on my system, because the principal weight of the body is thrown on the outside ball, the weakest part of the foot, expanding it three times beyond its natural tension,—first reducing the natural arch to a flat surface, and then actually reversing the arch; whilst nature did not intend that the outside ball should take any considerable weight, but that the heel and inside ball should take nearly the whole, and the outside ball just enough to steady and balance the body and keep it from falling over. Hence the reason why shoes made on my system look much smaller and narrower than the old, because the weight is thrown upon the ball inside of the arch, which is firm, and abundantly capable of sustaining the weight.

Before I proceed to tell you how I accomplish this essential condition, without making my shoe look as broad and crooked and awkward as the so-called anatomical shoemakers in their nondescript concerns, I will call your attention to a diagonal line extending from C to A. This begins in the centre of the heel and stops at a junction with the base line at the great toe. This I call the instep line, because exactly over this line hangs the instep cone, or highest portion of the last, as it is also the highest and thickest part of the foot all the way down the instep to the end of the great toe. This instep is shown in another diagram. You would naturally conclude at first sight that a shoe built out an inch or two beyond the centre of the instep line in the old last would be wide and ungainly. On this point I will simply explain, that

the sole or tread, or bearing surface of my last, is no wider than that of the old-fashioned kind; it is merely pushed sideways under the foot. I cut it under, so to speak, on the inside; that is to say, I build the last out on the inside of the instep and ball so that it shall overhang the sole. Several of the diagrams show this peculiarity. I thus form a generous space for this hard, thick abutment of the arch. I give the unyielding part of the structure a comfortable resting place, so that it is not being forced, and in its turn forcing the upper leather to assume a position beyond the limits of the sole on the outside. The bearing surface, or tread, or sole, is thus preserved of fair width, and is placed just where the weight comes, whilst freedom of action, weight and motion is thus preserved. As a result upon the future action, the upper leather does not tread over the sole, as is the case with the old fashioned shoes. A glance at diagrams 3 and 4 will show you what I mean. No. 3 is made from a photograph of a boot constructed on an ordinary last, and had been worn until broken in. The outer ball, of course, extends beyond the sole. The toes do not; but this is only because they cannot, as they are held in their cramped position by strong leather. If that leather were cut away, you would discover two toes and a half instantly protruding beyond the edge of that sole. But the outer ball has forced the upper leather over the sole, and nobody can tell how fearfully the poor foot has suffered in the operation.

No. 3.

No. 4 shows you how the sole should look after months of wear; there should be no bulging or treading down of the upper leather outwardly. The sole should still be where it was first placed, under the bearing of the foot.

No. 4.

Referring you again to diagram No. 2, I desire to say that it represents a natural foot, with the groined arch unbroken and the toes spread out. It will be noticed that the actual bearing surface is quite narrow, except at the toe and heel. The heel, and the inner ball, with its great-toe continuation, are the chief points of contact, and these sustain the body's weight. If the double arches of the foot were broken down, as they often are from the effect of bad clothing, the sole would more ready resemble the surface of diagram No. 1—a flat, unarched structure. The lighter portions of diagram No. 2 show the rounded outline of the pads, which protect the muscular and bony structures from the effect of concussion. If the toes shown in diagram No 2 were brought into gentle apposition to each other, as they would be were a stocking drawn on the foot, the sole of a shoe cut according to the dotted lines of diagram No. 1 would be found to cover perfectly the bearing surfaces.

No. 5.

Here (No. 5) is a view of the sole of my last, with the inner overhanging ball. It will be found to be symmetrical and elegant in appearance. The outline of its sole is the outline of Fig. 1.

No. 6.

This is a top view of my last. You will notice the instep following the line from the centre of the heel to the outside of the great toe, thus placing the thickest part of the last just where the human foot is thickest. If you say this last looks crooked, you must remember that you are looking at the top now, which has a crooked appearance on account of the overhanging ball. You must look again at the *sole*, which you will notice is less crooked than most of the blocks of wood which shoes have heretofore been made over. If you say that this ball is more prominent and overhangs more than the natural foot, I must tell you that this is necessary, in order to provide for the natural contraction of the upper leather—the tendency to draw back after the last is withdrawn and the tension released. After numerous exact reproductions of the foot, with the same tendency on its part to press over toward the outer side, I discovered that I must leave an excess of wood on my last at this overhanging point of the large ball. This provided a spacious resting-place for the more prominent parts of the foot and secured an even tread upon the sole, without the outer bulging of the upper. This overhanging prominence of the inner ball

—which is an essential part of my invention—is also shown in the following diagrams, Nos. 7 and 8:

No. 7.

No. 8.

In the next diagram (No. 9), which is an outside view of the last, we are shown the sole of the shank, or outer margin of the hollow of the foot, nearly level with the

No. 9.

sole of the outer ball and heel, as is the case in the human foot. The ordinary last makes no account of this anatomical fact, but hollows the last at this point, and thus secures uncomfortable pressure from the shoe, in a spot where pressure should be but light. If you wet the bottom of your foot and then stand on dry paper, you will notice that the shank, or outer portion of the hollow of the foot, leaves a slight mark, while the inner surface, the arch, does not touch unless your foot is broken down. This will convince you that the last should be made hollow, or arched on the inside, and should be left nearly flat on the outside.

No. 10.

An inspection of this diagram (No. 10) shows you the outward extension of the last to provide for the spread of the foot. Here you are looking directly at the back of the heel ; but beyond it is shown the outer ball and the space provided for the smaller toes, which, in the old last, are not taken into account, and therefore are left utterly unprovided for. There is absolutely no method of securing comfortable shoes on the old last, except by submitting to a surgical operation for the removal of the two smaller toes and about one-third of the thinnest portion of the foot. Not only is no place provided for them in the marvelous wisdom of the average last-maker, but the added injustice is done them of forcing the larger toes over upon them by reason of a lack of suitable space for the more powerful neighbors.

No. 11.

The diagram here shown (No. 11) exhibits the foot in its abominable leathern cell, projecting on the outside far beyond the edge of the sole, with the small toes bent inward upon themselves, like the phalanges of a partly closed hand, and with the great toe distorted out of all human shape. It is not an anomalous toe, by any means. It is taken from life, and is a common type of distortion.

No. 12.

Here (No. 12) the same foot is seen uncovered. The great toe has been swung, by the gradual, unceasing pressure of leather, nearly two inches out of its true line. As it has moved, the space left in the joint has gradually filled with osseous material, and the great, unsightly protruding and permanent joint is the result. What misery all this deformity announces! What days of agony it asserts! What torture, which might readily have been dispensed with, had the better system prevailed.

A brief description of the method which I adopt in constructing a last to fit the foot will, perhaps, prove interesting. This is best shown by reference to the accompanying diagram (No. 13).

No. 13.

The person to be measured stands upon paper, with bare feet. Their outlines are then traced with a pencil, as shown in the first diagram. A line is now drawn from the inside bearing of the heel to the inside bearing of the ball, through to the end of the great toe. A parallel line is next drawn upon the other side, which passes through the third toe, the distance between the two being determined by the width of the heel, as shown in diagram No. 1. In this way the exact position of the instep, the shank, the ball, the toes, the play of the muscles, and the natural spring and spread of the foot, are accurately ascertained.

The location of the instep relative to the length of the foot is determined mainly by measurement. A glance at any foot not deformed, however, will show that it is never located in the centre of the foot, but is invariably upon the inside of the centre line. From these diagrams, and the correct measurements taken (the lines on the diagram being followed), the Last is constructed; and when thus made in strict accordance with the natural form of the foot, it will be found to be in practice far

preferable to any other. Boots and Shoes made upon it will accurately and comfortably fit the feet, and will not tread over, as the foot is held squarely upon the sole. The boots also made upon this Last make a better appearance than the ordinary ones, as they retain their proper shape until worn out. Here are reproductions

by photograph of a pair of ladies' McComber boots which had been worn more than three months. It will be seen that the upper leather does not bulge out and overhang the sole, as is always the case with boots made on the common last.

The attention with which my remarks have been received convinces me that the subject is not without interest to you. Of its importance, all thoughtful persons must bear me witness. If ignorance has brought misery to all mankind, it is important that the power so to abuse and torment and deform shall cease. It *will* cease when the people are educated to a knowledge of the old errors, and the nature of the reform. To this end I labor, and in this labor I ask your co-operation.

A SUBJECT FOR REFLECTION.

FATHERS & MOTHERS SAVE YOUR CHILDREN.

"THE cry of the children" goes up from every household in the land for the cruel tortures inflicted upon them. There should not be a deformed or sickly child in any civilized country, and yet how few of them are absolutely healthy. The first right of every child is a sound, healthy, perfectly-formed body. It should be born thus, and no care should be considered too great to preserve it in a normal condition. A healthy, well-balanced mind cannot exist in an unhealthy, tortured body, and the mother who cares most for her child's mental vigor and moral purity will pay the greatest attention to its physical perfection. While this should be the rule, the fact is, that if the average mother should, with malice aforethought, turn her ingenuity to making the lives of her children miserable, she could scarcely succeed in doing worse than she does through thoughtlessness or ignorance. "Children's Rights" seem to be among those things that almost nobody feels bound to respect.

NATURE IS NOT AT FAULT.

They are born, and must run their own hard chances of living. If they grow to the estate of manhood or womanhood it is rather in spite of neglect and impediments thrown in their way than on account of

the care they have received. In babyhood they are the most abused of living creatures. Their little, tender, delicate bodies are bound and compressed with "bands" and "swaddles" until their vital organs are contracted or forced out of place, and their small, feeble feet and legs are cramped and dressed down and weighted with pounds of useless "long clothes," that prevent needful exercise of the limbs, impede circulation, and check growth. To give the child a trim figure, to display finery, to gratify maternal vanity, its best chances for growth, and health, and true beauty, are denied it.

MUSCLES MUST NOT BE RESTRAINED.

The restless little limbs of a healthy, properly dressed child are always moving, unless it is asleep. Deprived of thus gaining strength for the time when it is to bear upon them the weight of its body and begin to walk, no wonder that, cramped and confined as the nether limbs of our children are the first six or eight months of their lives, we have so many splay-footed, knock-kneed, bandy-legged children. Just look at a baby's foot.

BEAUTIFUL MECHANISM.

There is no more beautiful and curious member of the human body than a healthy, natural foot. Formed in graceful outlines, it delights the eye; constructed with admirable skill, having a mechanism worthy of the Divine hand which moulded it, it instructs the mind and fills the heart with admiration of Him who doeth all things well. And yet, while the skilled laborer and the artist unite their powers to provide suitable and handsome coverings for the limbs, body, and head; while science is called upon to preserve the body from disease, and to apply methods of strengthening and developing nearly every other part of the system, the foot alone, the foundation upon which the whole

body rests, is neglected. It is not only neglected, it is outraged, abused and deformed, by crowding it into coverings entirely at variance with nature and anatomy, as ruthlessly as molten metal is poured into the mould the shape of which it is expected to take.

PROGRESS OF DISTORTION.

I have spoken of the beauty of the foot as naturally made. How many of my readers can look at their own feet and call them beautiful? Why are they not as handsome as the infant's foot? It is because their feet have been most cruelly treated and their original beauty despised and destroyed.

The distortion of the foot commences with the first tottering steps of the child. From the time the innocent babe commences to walk alone, until death, this process continues. The first pair of shoes may not accomplish serious injury, but, as ordinarily constructed, they are sure to commence the deforming process. The foot is in a cramped, unnatural position, the great toe is forced inward towards the others, and its joints begin to put on the appearance of a protuberance. The abominable work is fairly begun, never to be suspended.

MULTIPLICATION OF WOES.

The delicate frame work of soft and imperfectly ossified bones forced into a leather case, having no proper adaptation to the shape of the structure which it clothes, gradually assumes the shape of the ill-formed and unyielding sheath. It does not thus conform itself to the barbarous structure provided for it without inducing suffering or causing a multitude of evils. It suffers at every point of contact, and it entails upon the poor little wearer numerous lasting woes. The circulation is impeded at the very period of youthful development,

when it should be free and unchecked. The result of this is found in congestion of the vital organs, the brain, the heart, the liver, and the kidneys. How many a child who has been called a poor scholar has owed the failure in the daily lesson to badly formed boots or shoes.

Let it be understood, as it is not now, that the mere local pain and disturbance caused by the present style of dressing the feet is but a very small portion of the evil which it does, or may cause. If free circulation is impeded at any one point, some other part of the body must necessarily have more than its share of blood—must be engorged, and engorgement is congestion, and congestion is always dangerous.

ARGUMENT FOR AMELIORATION.

A clear head and impeded circulation cannot go hand in hand If this is true of adults it is even more true of children.

In extreme youth the human brain is very susceptible to all influences. The bones, muscles and tissues of the body are tender, and receive impressions readily; these impressions remain through life. As evil companions influence the mind and heart of a child, that the impressions and ideas received are retained forever, to the dire injury of his moral being, so the unnatural pressure put upon any part of the body leaves its traces in after years. As true now as ever is the old saying: "Just as the twig is bent the tree is inclined." The most evil companion a child's foot can have is a blunderingly-made ill-fitting shoe. Ask your family physician how many diseases may be engendered or aggravated by abuse of the foot, and after he has told you all he can think of, multiply the number of ills recited by three and you may hit somewhere near the mark, and get an appreciative idea of the

wrong done a little child by compelling him to wear a shoe of the present day. It behooves parents then to start right, as well in the physical as in the moral develop-

PHYSICAL IMPROVEMENT.

ment of their little ones. If they would have their children walk uprightly as men and women, let them be as careful how they distort their feet as they are how they permit their morals to be distorted. The errors of youth may be repented of; the deformity remains. To begin right with the child is the duty of the parent, because the child is not able to exercise intelligent judgment. With a start in the right direction all things are possible; but with a deformity commenced almost at the cradle absolute relief is difficult and uncertain. The Chinaman who compresses the feet of his infant daughter is scarcely more cruel, and is guilty of hardly greater barbarity, than the American father who suffers the tender feet of his children to be practically ruined for life by forcing them into the nameless abominations which are generally considered respectable foot coverings.

FACTS FOR CONSIDERATION.

The statements which I have made are not made at random, they are statements which will bear the most thorough investigation, and are the result of many years of study and experience in connection with the human foot. I have at last perfected a system for making lasts and boots and shoes to fit the feet, which has been deemed worthy of letters patent by the United States Patent Office, and which is so perfect and correct in its application that I am able to make lasts and boots and shoes which will not deform the foot, but which will fit comfortably and easily upon any foot. "Breaking in" is unknown in connection with boots and shoes made upon my plan. The shoes

are as easy the first day they are worn as they are after they have been in use a month.

TRY THEM AND BE COMFORTABLE.

This statement is not exaggerated, but is literally true, and all will agree that it is a result never before attained. It has been heretofore invariably conceded impossible to make shoes to fit the feet perfectly and easily from the start, and that will look well and present a graceful appearance. Nothing is farther from the truth. I assert, without fear of successful contradiction, that boots and shoes made by my system are handsomer and more artistic in shape and configuration than any other boots or shoes now in vogue.

BEAUTY, HEALTH, AND ECONOMY.

What more is desired in a shoe than that it is graceful in shape and healthful in its effects upon the wearer, and twice as durable as the old style, (because there is no undue strain upon it,) provided it can be bought for precisely the same material, cut and made upon correct principles, at the same price as the old, blundering, haphazard made shoe. Fathers and mothers, if you desire to see your children grow up healthy and happy, if you desire their own best good—as I know you do—lend a hand in crushing this monstrous evil, this deforming, abusing and contorting of human feet. It is right that a remedy should be found; it is right that when found that remedy should be applied. I could give you a dozen tests which would prove what I say. I content myself with two. Try and see how much strength exists in your toes. There should be great strength there; there is practically but very little. Very few can support themselves by their toes alone, without resting partially upon the ball of the foot. This is because people cannot nor

do not use their toes naturally when walking in the shoes now provided for them. If shoes were properly constructed all the toes would assist naturally in walking.

REASONS FOR OBEDIENCE TO NATURAL LAWS.

It is a fact not to be denied, that a very small percentage of persons who have arrived at mature years are in the possession of feet which approximate to the perfect shape of a natural foot. The boots and shoes and lasts for individual feet made under my system, and under my supervision, for those of all ages and of both sexes, from one year upward, can be had upon application to Joel McComber, No. 52 East 10th Street, five doors West of Stewart's Palatial Store. The second and best test is to come and try them on your own feet and those of your children.

LASTS FOR CHILDREN.

The rapid growth of children's feet renders a frequent change of last necessary. This constant change would be considered rather too expensive for many families. To make it possible for parents to preserve the feet of their children with no expense except the cost of shoes, I have decided to make no charge for the frequent renewal of lasts. In fact, all who employ me to provide for themselves and their families my improved boots and shoes are provided with my patent lasts without charge. This will enable parents to meet the constant change in the size of growing feet without expense.

THE TRUE PURPOSE OF THE

McCOMBER LAST AND SHOE.

THE public labor under a strong delusion in regard to the true purpose of this *Last* and *Shoe*. My system has drafted the Last for sound, healthy, natural feet. Shoes made thereon will conform to such feet and confer all necessary support and protection, and, moreover, they will preserve the feet in a healthy, normal condition; but deformed, weakened, broken-down feet are all exceptions to the general rule, and must be provided for by exceptional provisions. It is unreasonable to expect that any Shoe made upon a Last corresponding exactly to a foot with its original symmetry unimpaired, should fit the same foot after it has become misshapen and distorted. Imagine a man with the misfortune of a humped back, demanding of his tailor a coat such as would conform to the symmetry of a well-proportioned individual, and at the same time requiring not only that the garment shall be a neat, handsome, easy fit, but that it shall conceal the hump which deforms him. No argument is necessary to convince a rational being of the utter impossibility of the thing, and yet some people come to me demanding precisely this absurdity. After their feet are literally ruined by the old system of shoe-fitting, as shown by muscles wasted and arches broken down, toes covered with corns and bunions, overriding and contracted, bones bent and twisted out of all natural shapes, with no regular bearing surfaces, but only a few callosities instead, they come to

me expecting that the McCOMBER SHOE will, as if by magic, restore such feet to all their pristine beauty and make them once more comely in appearance and comfortable in feeling. Some of this class tell me that they have not known any genuine comfort with their feet for many years, and that during this long period they have indulged in any amount of suppressed and expressed profanity against the craft. Now, to relieve these unfortunates and make their lives tolerable, I am compelled to deface the McCOMBER LAST, and yet they insist that their Shoes, compelling these deformities from necessity, must be *handsome* as well as comfortable, and at the same time not show their *deformities*. Bunions as large as hen's eggs cannot be thus concealed, whilst they must be relieved from pressure to permit ease and the gradual reduction of their size. If to these excresences are added broken-down arches, by which the foot is broadened out, what is called a handsome, well-proportioned shoe would only increase the evil. The McCOMBER Last and Shoe in all its perfection must be modified, and even deformed in its appearance (as I have said), in order to fit the abnormal foot, and therefore if the Shoe when finished does not look neat and comely, the fault is in the foot and not in the Last or in the system of manufacture. Moreover, if the customer does not accept and pay for the Lasts and Shoes which I am thus compelled to shape in order to meet his individual deformities, they remain upon my hands as so much dead and worthless stock. All this requires extra work and expense, for which some customers decline to pay, and it sometimes seems as if the distortions of their *soles* had brought about a still more serious soul deformity, for these suffering and distorted souls actually decline to accept the Lasts and Shoes made expressly for them, not

on the ground that they don't fit but because they are not handsome.

THE DISTORTED FOOT

Is a wonderful INDICATOR OF CHARACTER, no matter what may be said of the head. My daily experience has long since demonstrated that the Phrenologists have made an elevated mistake. Grimes teaches that by touching any special organ and exciting the will power in the same direction, the subject will give forth manifestations corresponding to the faculty indicated by the organ touched. But the foot-bumps (corns and bunions) are so well defined that, when excited, they produce their effects with still more certainty. In passing the measure over the foot I have found that a very gentle pressure on the most highly developed *organ* produces the most striking mental and moral demonstration, proving that the whole brain and nervous system are completely under the control of deformed feet. Thus an abnormal foot makes an abnormal brain and character.

Both men and women of culture and character, possessed of intelligence on other subjects, are yet constantly exhibiting the most perverted tastes, which lead them to exact such impossibilities that I sometimes feel constrained to abandon such portion of the adult population as are deformed beyond redemption and labor only for the little ones who can be saved from life-long misery and its attendant bodily and mental pervertion, and for those grown-up folks only who have not had their feet and common sense wholly ruined by bad shoeing. I sometimes fear that by continuing to labor for the grossly perverted I shall be a victim of that bankruptcy of soul which extends far beyond the pocket. If I were merely required to fit the distorted feet, I could do it cheerfully

and successfully ; but to meet the extravagant exactions of warped and distorted brains at the same time, is a task transcending ordinary capacities and compelling extraordinary patience.

Let me say, in addition, that I cannot perform miracles ; I cannot speak into being a new and perfect foot in place of those distorted and diseased by long abuse and maltreatment. There is no power in my system to instantly remedy all the evil effects of long continued violation of Nature's simplest laws. I claim no such wonderful power, but I can and do put an end to the torture and torment which so many suffer ; I can and do deprive the corn-doctor of his business and his stipend; I can and do give ease where misery has long existed. This change I effect not by any miraculous agency nor by any great display of genius, but simply by causing the sufferer to clothe his feet consistently. My acts harmonize with Nature's laws, without which harmony there is violence, and with violence there comes misery. I cannot hardly begin to cover every possible phase of this important topic in this little pamphlet.

Questions will arise in many minds, and these I will gladly answer when presented. In fact I solicit enquiries on all points connected with the feet, their diseases and their clothing ; all such will be answered verbally or in writing. I have other matter in preparation, which will be presented from time to time. One caution is necessary. Since my system has found favor with the best citizens there are other custom bootmakers here who claim to be using the McComber Lasts. This is untrue. Those custom shoemakers who profess to enjoy this privilege are guilty of deception and fraud. For several years I earnestly endeavored to induce shoemakers to adopt my patent system, but without success. I found

that those who attempted to construct goods upon my lasts failed to carry out the plan, and either could not or would not work strictly upon my principle. They fell at once into the old groove, and made goods of no real merit. I therefore abandoned all idea of converting the New York shoemakers. I said, "They are bound to their idols: let them alone." No custom shoemaker in New York City has the right to use my system for making men's, women's or children's boots and shoes, except myself.

I desire to call the attention of intending patrons to the fact that they are now expected to purchase the lasts made for them by me. I am not willing to construct lasts to fit their feet at my own expense, but am compelled to charge a fair price for all lasts furnished, excepting for sufferers who are not able to pay for them. These lasts will be carefully preserved for the use of the customer, and goods may thus at any time be ordered by mail as well as in person. I, however, continue to make my patent lasts for all who desire them, whether I am subsequently employed to construct boots or shoes upon them or not. I cannot assert that the ordinary shoemaker will make goods according to my principle, even when working upon my lasts, as I know of no other shoemaker, whether working upon my lasts or not, who knows any more about the anatomy and practical workings of the feet of the inhabitants of this globe than he does about making suitable shoes for the man in the moon. It is, therefore, not to be expected that he should put any ideas except the simplest mechanical ones into his work. To ensure entire success he must be

AN EDUCATED WORKMAN;

by which I mean a workman who comprehends the philosophy of my improvement, and is enthusiastic in his en-

deavors to carry it out in practice. He must be able to distinguish a perfect foot from an imperfect one. This is not always an easy thing to do. Injuries to the foot are not perceptible at a glance. Not all feet which show no protruding corns or sensitive bunions are normal feet, by any means. Some feet which look symmetrical to the untaught eye are really very bad ones, because broken down in their arches, wasted in muscular power, and contracted and weakened at points where fullness and strength should exist. The continued and unequal pressure of the old shoe has deformed them, but so gradually that their owner has not observed the change. The shoemaker, if he is to clothe this wonderful organ, must know an injured foot on careful examination, not from its protuberances, but from the relative position of its various parts. Indeed, I make bold to assert, that no man can clothe the feet properly who has not dissected the human foot for himself so as to fully understand its workings and mechanism.

To secure the best results it is important that

THE BEST MATERIALS

should be used. There are various qualities of stock in use, and the price of this, as well as the quality of the labor employed, of course, greatly affects the cost of the manufactured article. I use no material but the best to be obtained in the markets of the world. It is not difficult to lessen the cost of a pair of boots or shoes to the extent of from one to five dollars per pair. Many shoemakers practise this deception, assuring their customers that they use only the highest cost of goods and employ only the most skillful workmen. These deceptions are very costly to the customers. The profit upon a pair of boots made of low grade materials, by cheap

and inferior workmen, is greater than it can be when the stock and workmanship are of the best. Some customers, in their eagerness to secure what appears to be a great bargain, encourage this deception, and force the shoemaker, if his integrity is not well entrenched, to claim for his work and his materials superior excellence. The truth is, however, that the customer is the sufferer in every instance, since the best imported articles can only be had by paying their standard price in gold. I can assert, without fear of successful contradiction, that there is no boot or shoe maker in the city of New York or Brooklyn, or in any of the environs of New York, using the same grade of stock, and the same high class of workmanship which I employ, who does not charge more than I demand. It is common for patentees of valuable improvements to levy a high tariff upon the consumer for the use of their invention. I, however, make no charge for the use of my patent, and levy no contribution upon my customers on that account. It is enough for me to hold and employ it for the good of those who patronise my reformed system I am satisfied with the very large patronage which the admitted excellence of my system has secured to me, and shall never demand the customary royalty from those who employ me.

UNSATISFACTORY RESULTS.

Let me remark, that not even the best leather and the most careful work will secure satisfactory results, so far as durability is concerned, in the case of feet having broken arches or semi-paralyzed muscles. The strain upon the leather is too severe for its powers of endurance. Diseased feet, too, with the perspiratory excretions vitiated by the maltreatment and distortion of the organs, tend to decay the leather and lessen its vitality. As I have had frequent occasion to remark, I cannot perform miracles.

I am compelled to decline to sell shoes which fit too closely, or which are too short, or which will in any way injure or distort the feet. Unless I am satisfied that the article is exactly right I do not allow it to leave my hands Of this I insist upon being the only judge. So far as clothing the feet intelligently and perfectly is concerned, I must be considered the doctor, or I can do you no good. I ask that the grossly-abused sufferers who call on me for relief should have confidence in me and in my judgment. I strive to deserve that confidence by close study and earnest labor. I am devoting my life to the study of the human foot in all its parts, in dissections of natural feet and of morbid specimens, and in devising methods for the relief of the misery which bad foot-clothing has imposed upon humanity. New ideas and added knowledge are continually pouring in upon the conscientious, earnest seeker after truth; and these I gladly apply for the benefit of those who seek my aid.

From the REV. DR. STEVENSON, *Editor of the Illustrated Christian Weekly of New York.*

WE usually let our advertising patrons tell their own story, and we do not even endorse what they say of their wares—that is a matter between them and our readers. But in the case of JOEL McCOMBER'S Shoes we cannot but speak. We have tried them and know them to be the *ne plus ultra* in their line. McCOMBER is a philosopher, a scientist, an anatomist, an expert in the shoe line. Let him measure and gauge, and study your feet, and if he does not give you a new idea of a comfortable and serviceable shoe, then—well, just try him.

From EX-GOVERNOR BULLOCK, *of Mass.*

WORCESTER, MASS., *July 2d*, 1877.

I HAVE taken of MR. JOEL McCOMBER'S manufacture many pairs of boots for myself and for members of my family, and I have found the same to give great satisfaction for durability, for the comfort of the wearer, and for best proofs of first-class workmanship in every particular. I give him the preference over *all whose work* I have ever tried.

ALEX. H. BULLOCK.

LANE
STORAGE